

STREET SMART

April 6, 2005

Governments
SANBAG
Working Together

Meeting Summary of the SANBAG Board of Directors

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■ SANBAG supports bills to protect Prop. 42

Board members voted unanimously to support three Assembly Constitutional Amendments to reduce or eliminate the suspension of Proposition 42 funds.

Voted into law in March 2002, Prop. 42 designates the state sales tax paid on gasoline to transportation projects. However, the proposition contains a clause that allows the Legislature, by a 2/3 vote, to transfer this revenue to the state general fund, in case of a fiscal crisis. Prop. 42 has been suspended since December 2002, and all signs point to its continued suspension during the next two fiscal years.

The three proposed amendments would protect these Prop. 42 funds in a variety of ways.

- ACA 11, sponsored by Assemblywoman Jenny Oropeza, would prohibit new loans from being initiated until other loans from Prop. 42 were repaid. It also would prevent more than two loans from being initiated within a 10-year period.
- ACA 9 by Assemblyman Russ Bogh would increase the threshold of the Legislature vote from 2/3 to 4/5.
- ACA 4, jointly sponsored by Assemblymen Tom Harman and George Plescia, would completely close the loophole that allows the transfer of Prop. 42 funds to the state's general fund during a fiscal emergency.



■ Call boxes may receive extreme makeover

SANBAG has taken steps to continue to make call boxes along San Bernardino County freeways more accessible to individuals with disabilities. These upgrades, however, will not begin until SANBAG is able to cover the \$1.6 million price tag.

The call box program is funded by \$1 DMV registration fees, which barely cover the annual operational costs for the 1,615 boxes countywide. SANBAG now is upgrading its boxes from analog to digital technology, a process which has taken six years to accumulate enough revenue to support.

Once revenues are built back up again from the DMV fees, SANBAG will resume its plans to make call boxes more accessible to people with speech and hearing impairments, as well as those with mobility limitations, such as wheelchair users. Upgrades may include installing keypads on the call boxes and relocating the boxes from areas in which a slope prevents access. Prior to these upgrades, SANBAG will be working to establish a countywide cell phone protocol for non-emergency assistance along state highways. This new program also would accept cell phone text-messaging, a useful tool for persons with speech or hearing impairments.

Because of the costs associated with these upgrades, it may take 6-8 years for the work to be completed, said Michelle Kirkhoff, SANBAG's Director of Air Quality/Mobility Programs.

■ Caltrans facing workload, staffing challenges

At its lowest staffing level in years, the local Caltrans district is struggling to manage the large increase in large and small highway projects headed to the Inland Empire.

Caltrans District 8, which covers San Bernardino and Riverside counties, will see "an unprecedented level of highway improvements," said Director Anne Mayer, who recently announced her resignation, effective later this spring.

With just under 1,300 employees, the district's low staffing level is at odds with the workload and population growth in the area, Mayer said.

Local agencies also are pushing for their projects to be completed first, creating a huge prioritization challenge. Mayer advised cities to direct federal dollars to large projects and pressed for continued streamlining of processes.



Anne Mayer

Down the road ...

- April 13: Administrative Committee, 9 a.m.
- April 14: Major Projects Committee, 9 a.m.
- April 15: CANCELLED, Mtn.-Desert Committee
- April 20: Plans & Programs Committee, 12 noon
- April 27: Women's Transportation Seminars Inaugural Luncheon, Ontario, 12 noon; Interstate 215 Sound Wall Meeting, Santa Fe Depot

Capital improvements, more riders on Metrolink's horizon SANBAG adopts short-range commuter rail plan

SANBAG will invest more than \$42 million in Metrolink capital improvements and nearly \$30 million to help operate the daily trains over the next four years, under a Commuter Rail Short-Range Transit Plan adopted by the Board of Directors. The plan provides a blueprint for commuter rail expenses from 2006 to 2009.

This month's issue of *Measuring Success* offers an overview of the future of San Bernardino County's Metrolink service. Measure I funds were used to launch the service in 1992.

Metrolink history and ridership

SANBAG and the transportation commissions in Riverside, Los Angeles, Orange and Ventura counties are members of the Southern California Regional Rail Authority, also known as Metrolink. In operation since 1992, Metrolink now runs seven routes. Three of the seven routes have stations within San Bernardino County.

Systemwide, Metrolink serves more than 38,000 passengers each weekday. Its most heavily used route is the San Bernardino Line, which spans between Los Angeles and San Bernardino. This line set a new record this winter with 12,000 average daily passengers.

In addition to weekday service, the San Bernardino Line also carries an average of 2,700 passengers on Saturdays and 1,500 passengers on Sundays. Special event trains and selected holiday trains also operate periodically.



The East Ontario station serves Metrolink riders on the Riverside Line between Riverside and L.A.

Capital improvements

SANBAG's budget for capital investments in the Metrolink system varies widely from year to year, depending upon the level of improvements to be undertaken. The Short Range Transit Plan allocates \$42.2 million for capital improvements, with annual budgets ranging from \$14.5 million in 2006 to \$6.9 million in 2009. This \$42.2 million will help fund:

- Renovation and rehabilitation projects, such as new concrete ties, station improvements, new signals, rail grinding and bridge repairs
- Replacement of locomotives and passenger cars
- Flood control improvements at Cedar, Cactus and Beech streets in the central San Bernardino Valley
- New electronic passenger information system
- Second phase of the Eastern Area Maintenance Facility
- Platform extension and pedestrian bridge at the Rancho Cucamonga station

- Expanded parking at the Upland, San Bernardino and Rialto stations
- Construction of a passing track on the Inland Empire Orange County Line
- Conversion of an old mail track to train tracks at L.A. Union Station
- Construction of a mid-day storage yard for trains in Los Angeles
- Other system-wide improvements, including vending machines, a grade-crossing safety program and the purchase of new trains

Operating expenses and service expansion

SANBAG has budgeted \$29.8 million over the next four years to continue existing train operations and to expand service on the three lines that serve county riders. Proposed service additions include:

- One peak-hour round trip train from San Bernardino to Los Angeles
- Three peak-hour round trip "reverse commute" trains to San Bernardino
- Four weekday off-peak trains from San Bernardino to Los Angeles
- Four new Saturday trains and four new Sunday trains from San Bernardino to Los Angeles
- Train service on six holidays (New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas)
- Expansion of service on the Inland Empire-Orange County Line and the Riverside Line, based upon negotiations with Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroads

Funding

A combination of local, state and federal funding sources will be used to pay for the capital improvements. These sources include Local Transportation Funds (LTF), State Transit Assistance funds, Federal Transit Administration funds and Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality funds. Operational expenses are funded solely by LTF.

